

Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research

FOURTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2015–2020



ASIA-PACIFIC NETWORK FOR
GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH

APN Fourth Strategic Plan 2015–2020

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APN FOURTH STRATEGIC PLAN

The world is coming together with a growing consensus that we need to work together to take science-informed action, and APN is part of that endeavour. APN demonstrates its ability to contribute to this global effort vis-à-vis its Fourth Strategic Plan and looks forward to contributing to supporting the citizens of the Asia-Pacific region in the future.

MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR AND DIRECTOR

It is our honour and pleasure to present the Fourth Strategic Plan (2015–2020) of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN).

Societies' ability to respond to global change depends on the resilience of human and environmental systems in the face of these changes. Improving understanding of the Earth's systems and its interactions with human societies, improving predictions of longer-term causes and trends of climate change, and preparing nations for future events by applying effective management tools of disaster risk reduction are grand challenges.

APN continues its mission to enable countries in the Asia-Pacific region to address these challenges successfully. Projects and activities funded by APN are aimed at integrating across the natural, social and political science disciplines to find solutions to global change problems that are of major concern in the region.

To realise its mission, APN's Fourth Strategic Plan (2015–2020) was developed based on the evaluation of its third strategic phase, which ran from 2010 to 2015.

With the support from its members and key partners and steered by the strategies stipulated in the present document, APN will enforce its efforts in designing solution-oriented collaborative research on global change and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in developing countries.



Peldon Tshering
Chair, Steering Committee
Asia-Pacific Network for
Global Change Research



Hiroshi Tsujihara
Director, Secretariat
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RATIONALE

The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half of the world's population with development aspirations that challenge the sustainability of natural resources, communities and their cultural heritage. Achieving these aspirations is further complicated by the impacts of natural and anthropogenic changes in the Earth's bio-geophysical system.

Recent research and supporting observations have provided new insights into these changes and their impacts but have, at the same time, raised a number of new and challenging issues and questions. The Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) seeks to identify and address these issues through scientific research, capacity building, science-policy dialogue and awareness raising.

APN defines "global change" as the set of natural and human-induced processes in the Earth's physical, biological, and social systems that, when aggregated, are significant at a global scale. These changes manifest themselves differently at regional and local scales and require place-based solutions. APN strives to enable the countries of the region to:

1. Participate in, and benefit from, cooperative research in the region that contributes to the development of sound science-based response strategies and measures;
2. Develop scientific capacity to understand and address these important issues; and
3. Strengthen interactions among scientists and policy makers to support scientifically sound and evidence-based decision-making.

Finally, recognising the interactive role of regional processes in the overall Earth system, APN also aims to link the initiatives it sponsors with related projects conducted in other regions and under the aegis of global-scale programmes.

1. VISION, MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VISION

An Asia-Pacific region that is successfully addressing the challenges of global change and sustainability.

MISSION

The mission of APN is to enable investigations of changes in the Earth's life support systems and their implications for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region through support for research and science-based response strategies and measures, effective linkages between science and policy, and scientific capacity development. APN, therefore, supports investigations that will:

1. Identify, explain, project and predict changes in the context of both natural and anthropogenic forcing;
2. Assess potential regional and global vulnerability of natural and human systems; and
3. Contribute, from the science perspective, to the development of policy options for appropriate responses to global change and sustainable development.

GOALS

- Goal 1.** Supporting regional cooperation in global change research on issues particularly relevant to the region
- Goal 2.** Enhancing capabilities to participate in global change and sustainability research and support science-based decision-making
- Goal 3.** Strengthening appropriate interactions among scientists and policy makers, and providing scientific input to policy decision-making and scientific knowledge to civil society and the public
- Goal 4.** Cooperating with other global change and sustainability networks and organisations

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Strengthen APN's unique niche and shared ownership among members.
- Broaden APN's financial base.
- Encourage participatory processes involving scientists and policy makers to identify emerging issues and support decision-making.
- Ensure both high scientific quality and regional relevance.
- Provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and best practices.
- Recognise the special challenges of developing countries.
- Encourage stakeholder engagement throughout projects from design to implementation and evaluation.
- Emphasise interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.
- Communicate Network results broadly to scientific communities, policy makers, civil society and the general public.

2. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In order to achieve its mission, APN has identified the four goals mentioned above. Each goal may be achieved primarily through support of competitively selected activities in research, capacity building and science-policy dialogue.

GOAL 1

Supporting regional and international cooperation in research on global change and sustainability issues particularly relevant to the region

This is the highest priority goal of APN. It addresses APN's core belief that regional and international cooperation is essential to understand and respond to the effects of global change and address the challenges of sustainable development, relevant to the Asia-Pacific region.

Key Investment Instrument: Underpinning knowledge creation

Examples of activities for potential focus under this goal include:

1. Facilitating and supporting collaborative global change and sustainability research projects in the region;
2. Organising regional meetings to highlight global change research and its possible implications for policy-making; and
3. Systematically identifying key scientific priorities and emerging scientific issues for the region.

GOAL 2

Enhancing capabilities to participate in research on global change and sustainability and to support science-based decision-making

It is vital that APN member countries have the capacity to conduct high quality research regarding global change that provides underpinning scientific input for policy makers and policy-making processes. APN believes that research must involve local scientists and that their capacity must be enhanced in order to develop and continue their research as well as analyse and utilise their research outcomes.

Key Investment Instrument: Local capacity development

Examples of activities for potential focus under this goal include:

1. Supporting capacity development of early-career researchers in global change and sustainable development;
2. Supporting capacity development of policy makers, community leaders, resource managers, etc.; and
3. Cooperating with other international capacity development programmes.

GOAL 3**Strengthening appropriate interactions among scientists and policy makers, and providing scientific input to policy decision-making and scientific knowledge to civil society and the public**

APN recognises that policy decisions are made in a complex environment where many factors must be considered. APN's approach is to focus on strengthening appropriate links between the science and policy communities and other stakeholders. In addition, APN realises the importance of raising public awareness of global change issues based on sound science. Accordingly, APN will use public fora to raise public awareness of global change issues when appropriate opportunities arise.

Key Investment Instrument: Facilitation of science-policy interaction

Examples of activities for potential focus under this goal include:

1. Pursuing existing or creating new fora for discussion and interaction between scientists and policy makers;
2. Supporting training workshops for scientists to develop skills and techniques in providing science-based tools to support policy development; and
3. Encouraging stakeholder involvement in all phases of projects.

GOAL 4**Cooperating with other global change and sustainability networks and organisations**

It is vital that APN continues to develop strong partnerships with other global change and sustainability networks and organisations and, as a regional network, be aware of current and emerging research and related activities in the region and throughout the world. This goal supports each of the first three goals and enables APN to operate efficiently and effectively within the global change and sustainability communities.

Key Investment Instrument: Defining regional context of global issues

Examples of activities for potential focus under this goal include:

1. Organising collaborative projects in areas of common interest;
2. Inviting other global change research organisations to be involved in APN meetings and committees, and for APN to be represented at relevant meetings organised by others; and
3. Setting complementary agendas and initiating cooperative arrangements, where appropriate.

3. APN ACTION AGENDA

3.1 RESEARCH AGENDA

APN fosters the understanding of global environmental change by conducting regional research through collaboration and capacity development. APN's activities promote research that improves understanding of the physical, biological and human dimensions of change in the Earth system and advances science that informs decision-making regarding adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development in the following specific areas:

1. Climate Change and Climate Variability;
2. Biodiversity and Ecosystems;
3. Changes in the Atmospheric, Terrestrial and Marine Domains;
4. Resources Utilisation and Pathways for Sustainable Development; and
5. Risk Reduction and Resilience.

The above themes are often interrelated and involve the interface of natural, social, behavioural, economic and political sciences. In the 4th Strategic Phase, APN will increasingly emphasise this interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in addressing regional issues (see "Appendix 1" on page 13).

APN will continue to support research on thematic issues, such as climate adaptation, low carbon approaches, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

APN supports a range of research topics and other scientific activities as shown in the examples listed, although not exhaustive, in "Appendix 2. Research Pathways" on page 14.

APN serves the scientific and decision-making communities and other stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region. APN will invest in the identification of applicable methodologies and the development of new tools to improve the effectiveness of knowledge transfer between scientists and decision makers. APN recognises the importance of developing capacity and, therefore, APN will support research proposals that incorporate capacity development as a core element.

Examples of activities that APN might support are:

1. Promoting and strengthening global change and sustainability research, including addressing and identifying gaps via syntheses and assessment work, particularly under the five thematic areas identified in the Research Agenda;
2. Developing pathways and effective mechanisms to achieve sustainable development and develop adaptation strategies;
3. Encouraging place-based (site-specific) integrative research particularly from developing countries; and
4. Contributing to the evolving global change arena, including the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, and Future Earth.

3.2 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

In addition to supporting capacity development under its research agenda, APN also has a focus Capacity Development Agenda (CAPaBLE)¹. CAPaBLE is enhancing scientific capacity to improve decision-making related to global change and sustainability. This includes capacity development for early-career scientists and capacity enhancement for experienced leading scientists in developing countries.

Examples of capacity development activities that APN will undertake are:

1. Capacity development in the context of the five thematic areas under Research Agenda;
2. Establishing criteria and metrics for evaluating successful capacity development;
3. Contributing to capacity development components of the evolving global change arena, including the IPCC and IPBES, the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, and Future Earth;
4. Continue its capacity development efforts at levels from local to national, regional and global, particularly in developing countries; and
5. Continue to emphasise the successful “partnership” approach of CAPaBLE as the key for securing investment from stakeholders.

3.3 SCIENCE-POLICY AGENDA

APN is committed to strengthening evidence-based science-policy linkages, informing decision-making and enhancing public awareness. One important role of science is to provide the underpinning information for policy- and decision-making. Conversely, it is important to provide a forum for those stakeholders to express their needs.

Examples of activities that APN will support are:

1. Strengthening science-policy interactions/linkages across APN’s Action Agenda.
2. Empowering APN Members to share best practices and identify opportunities to promote science-policy interactions.
3. Fostering policy publications on high priority topics, including, for example, policy briefs, synthesis reports and assessments.
4. Cooperating with partners in global change research and sustainable development.
5. Developing a set of metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of science-policy linkages.
6. Raising awareness of and disseminating information to the policy- and decision-making communities, civil society and the public.

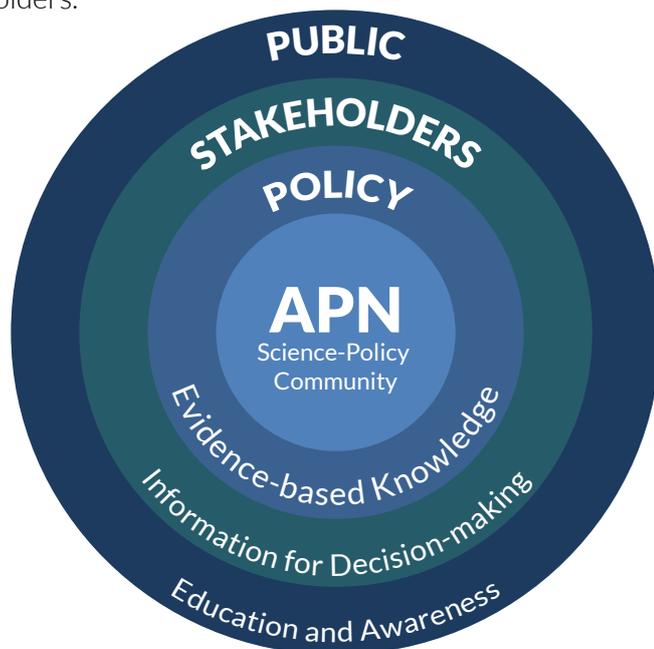


Figure 1. Levels of interaction for discussing and disseminating evidence-based knowledge from solutions-oriented research for decision-making

1 Born in 2003 as a World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) Type II Partnership Initiative.

3.4 COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH AGENDA

As a key tool for communication APN is developing improved strategies to ensure alignment with web-based developments and has adopted some dynamic approaches to keep abreast of the developments in this area. APN has embarked on an ambitious communication and outreach agenda that has led to the development of its website incorporating a metadata portal E-Library (E-Lib), daily bulletins, interaction with social media, including Twitter and Facebook. Outreach is more extensive than ever, with over 2,000 email subscribers and almost 16,000 unique page views to the E-Lib system in 2013. The growth in this area will be actively expanded in the 4th Strategic Phase through endeavours that ensure a robust e-platform for APN's growth and the community it serves.

Overall Target

The overall target of the communication and outreach strategy is to contribute to achieving APN's vision, mission and goals by strategically engaging different target audiences with tailor-designed information using the most appropriate tools for each group, produced in collaboration with key stakeholders.

To effectively implement the communication and outreach strategy, it is necessary to identify key messages and most appropriate content, format and channels to present these messages to each of the audience groups. In order to achieve the overall target, therefore, it is important to engage knowledge owners in the design and planning phase to determine project- or activity-specific messages for each communication campaign.

Target audiences

1. APN Members, governments, international organisations and donors, including present and potential funding partners
2. Decision makers and practitioners
3. Scientists and researchers and their respective institutions
4. Peer organisations
5. Media
6. Private sector, civil society and the general public

Major objectives

Major objectives are tabulated in Appendix 3.

Communication tools and products

1. Print media/e-publications (project reports, synthesis reports, books, information sheets, policy briefs, posters, brochures, etc.)
2. Mass media (newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, etc.)
3. Electronic media
 - a. Owned media (web news, database, e-newsletters, mailing lists, APN Friends site, blogs, videos, infographics, etc.)
 - b. Social media (free-flowing information exchange, interactive use of handheld devices, informal communications)
4. Events (workshops, meetings, exhibitions, press briefings, etc.)

4. APN MANAGEMENT APPROACH

APN's Framework Document sets out the roles and responsibilities of the organs and sub-organs of the organisation and details APN's arrangements and procedures. Under this framework APN will apply the following key management approaches as listed below.

4.1 INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBER COUNTRIES

APN will:

1. Continue to promote the many benefits of APN membership and strengthen Member countries' sense of ownership, and assist them in facing the challenges presented by global change and sustainability;
2. Encourage Member countries' representatives to play an active role in promoting APN's Action Agenda at local, national, regional and international levels; and
3. Assist Member countries to establish national global change and sustainability research programmes, and encourage collaboration with neighbouring countries, facilitated as appropriate by the Secretariat.

4.2 MANAGEMENT OF PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. APN will conduct programmes and other activities in four main areas, namely research, capacity development, science-policy linkages, and communication and outreach.
2. Proposals submitted under open calls will be selected through an international peer review process. In so doing, APN will actively expand its pool of reviewers to match the range of themes for APN's work programme.
3. APN will further improve the administrative structure for project management that ensures, among others:
 - disseminating outputs, including appropriately quantified data, by project leaders in a form that is useful to stakeholders;
 - continuing the policy of retaining a portion of project funds until project completion; and
 - developing measures for evaluating the effectiveness of science-policy linkages.

4.3 FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

1. APN, with the guidance of the Steering Committee and support of the Secretariat, will look into diversifying APN funding sources, encouraging more direct financial and in-kind contributions from Members, and strengthening opportunities for co-funding partnerships with Member countries, both developing and developed, and other bodies, as appropriate.
2. With continued generous support (financial and in-kind contributions) from the Hyogo Prefectural Government, APN's Secretariat will maintain its headquarters in Kobe. APN will also continue to extend its relationship with Hyogo Prefecture in areas of common interest.
3. APN will continue to have its financial affairs checked by an internationally accredited external auditor.

4.4 ALIGNMENT WITH THE GLOBAL CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITIES

1. Communicate and collaborate closely with organisations in the evolving global change and sustainability communities² to achieve APN’s goals. Such collaboration will include joint research projects, scientific capacity development activities, science-policy interfacing, enabling Asia-Pacific participation in international meetings, scoping workshops and developing and strengthening networks of scientists and policy makers.
2. Encourage APN-initiated and APN-funded projects to proactively seek collaboration with institutions and organisations that provide co-sponsorship and in-kind contributions.
3. Seek the active involvement of relevant institutions to collaborate in its activities.
4. Consider establishing partnerships with programmes of the global change and sustainability research communities, as appropriate.

4.5 COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

APN will strengthen its Communication and Outreach Agenda, especially through the development of new communication tools, organising outreach activities, establishing/strengthening partnerships. The different target audiences, such as government representatives of Member countries, the scientific research community and other interested parties will be engaged in this endeavour with tailor-designed information that is produced in collaboration with these stakeholder groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

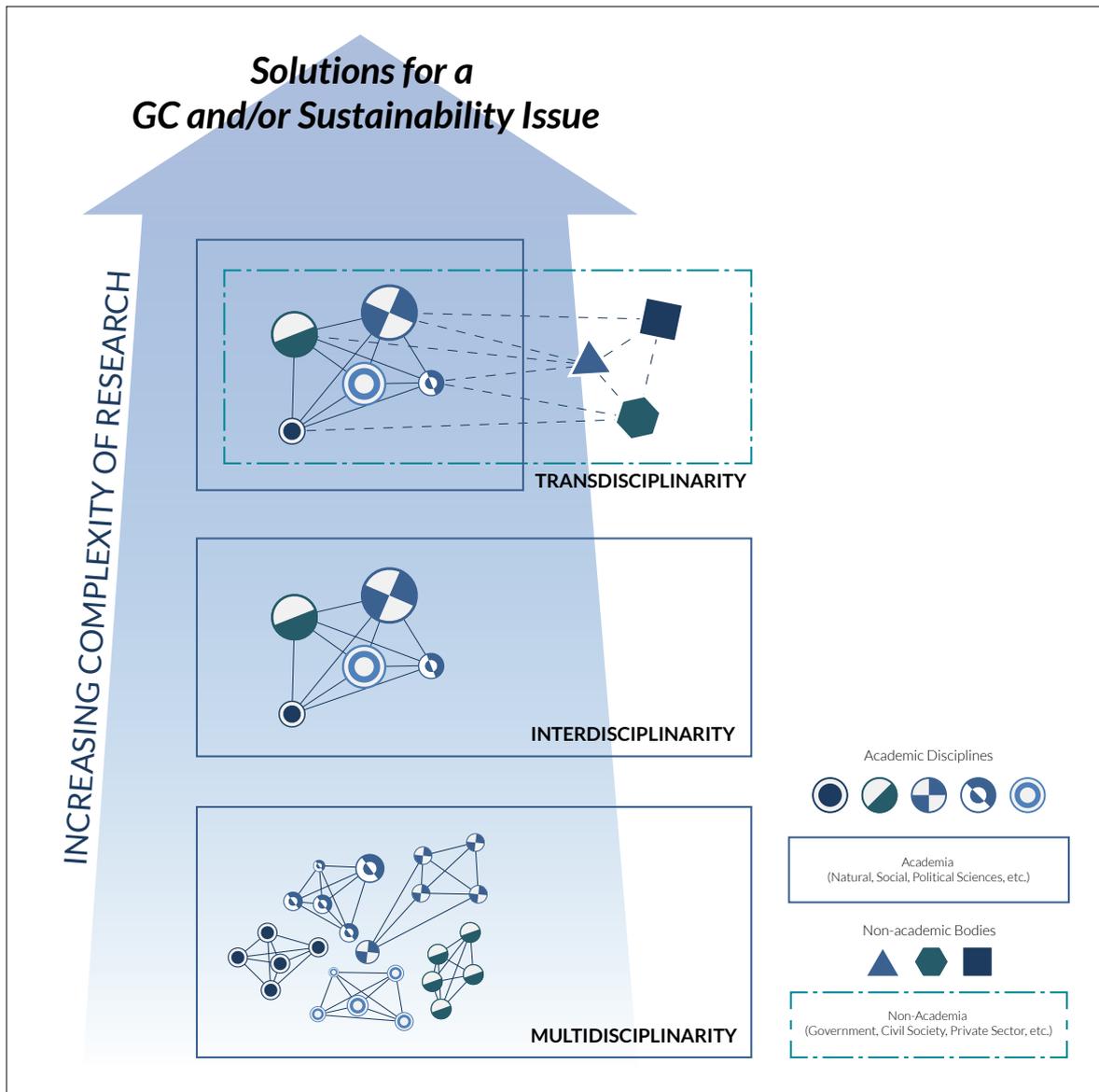
APN extends its deepest appreciation to the Fourth Strategic Plan Task Committee who worked diligently and tirelessly to realise the 4th Strategic Plan. They are Dr. W.A. Matthews, Dr. Kanayathu Chacko Koshy, Dr. Eileen Shea, Dr. Alexander Sterin, Dr. Akio Takemoto and Dr. Luis M. Tupas.

APN also gratefully acknowledges its national Focal Points and Scientific Planning Group Members in developing the present strategic plan.

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2 For example, at the time of writing, global change programmes of ICSU’s core Global Change Programmes have transitioned, or are in the process of transitioning, into a new 10-year initiative, Future Earth. For latest information of programmes and partners that APN is working with, refer to the APN website www.apn-gcr.org.

APPENDIX 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED RESEARCH



APPENDIX 2. RESEARCH PATHWAYS

APN supports a range of research topics and other activities that help achieve its objectives. Without prejudice to APN's decisions, the following list of indicative topics provides examples of the range of research that may be of interest to APN.

The information outlined below is not in any order of priority and is not exhaustive. It is provided, essentially, to facilitate in-country discussions and to assist those interested in working with APN. Please refer to APN's website (www.apn-gcr.org) for accurate and extensive information of projects that APN has funded.

Research on these topics transcend beyond disciplinary and thematic issues, thus APN also encourages proposals that address crosscutting issues covering research topics below.

1. Climate Change and Climate Variability

- › Regional scenarios for climate change including climate extremes
- › Implications of global change for predictability and stability of the Asian Monsoon, and societal consequences
- › Synergies between adapting to current natural climate variability and that of future human-induced climate change
- › Adaptation measures in the Asia-Pacific region
- › Aerosols, clouds, climate and human health
- › Mitigation options and their implications for sustainable development
- › Climate change and climate variability in cryosphere and water and food security
- › Integrated assessment techniques
- › Interactions between global change and regional change
- › Climate change and water, food and health management
- › Climate change and food systems
- › Regional climate model downscaling for adaptation, risk, resilience that could be transferred to the local level (including remote communities, districts, cities, etc.)
- › Risk reduction and resilience in the context of climate change

2. Ecosystems and Biodiversity

- › Changes in the carbon cycle and the water cycle
- › Global change and mountain systems
- › Coastal marine ecosystems
- › Freshwater ecosystems, lakes and rivers
- › Agriculture ecosystems, forests, rangelands, watersheds
- › Water quality and quantity, water reuse
- › Applied agricultural technology
- › Natural resources and environmental management
- › Fish-stock/live-stock assessments, natural and cultured
- › Interactions between global change and regional change
- › Invasive species
- › Integrated assessment techniques
- › Climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services
- › Global change and water, food and health management
- › Holistic assessment involving several issues in the same ecosystem

3. Changes in the Atmospheric, Marine and Terrestrial Domains

Atmospheric Change:

- Air quality changes at various spatial and temporal scales and their impacts
- Source and sink fluxes of greenhouse gases
- Impacts of increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide and air pollutants on agricultural and natural ecosystems in the Asia-Pacific region
- Downscaled climate change scenarios
- Uncertainty analysis
- Impacts of pollution on climate systems
- Air resource management

Changes in the Oceans and Coastal Systems:

- Aspects of physical and biogeochemical cycles and ecosystems in oxygen minimum zones (OMZ)
- Ocean acidification
- Decline and degradation of marine biodiversity, e.g., mangroves and coral reef ecosystems
- Impacts of developmental activities on the ecology and socio-economic systems of the Asia-Pacific region
- Understanding regional ocean climate variability and implications for fisheries and aquaculture
- Impacts of increasing sea surface temperature fluctuations

Terrestrial changes

- Structure and composition of the marine food web and its response to physical forcing and chemical regimes in coastal up-welling systems
- Research and information networks for land system change
- Assessment and enhancement of land use sustainability
- Nature, extent, causes and impacts of land use and land cover change
- Urban land use change
- Global change implications of urban sprawl/urban development

4. Resources Utilisation and Pathways for Sustainable Development

- Environmental implications of regional policy aimed at energy security and carbon limited society
- Renewable energy systems and sources
- Sustainable energy as it relates to greenhouse gases
- Economic impacts of global change on the Asia-Pacific region through the food trade chain
- Transfer of environmental burden (external cost) associated with enhancing regional material/products flow
- Environmental implications of trans-boundary trade of resources and waste
- Regional strategies and initiatives to reduce, reuse and recycle materials
- Regional water resource issues related to international river flows
- Biofuels and bioenergy technology to offset fossil fuel consumption
- Global environment change and land use planning
- Global change impacts and sustainable development
- Technology or equipment that are environmentally friendly (recyclables, biodegradable materials, life cycle analysis of materials, etc.)
- Globalisation (lifestyle, consumption patterns, transport systems, etc.) and global change
- Global change impacts of multilateral financial institutions
- Governance and institutional dimensions of global change

- Sustainable management of urban areas, coastal zones, etc.
- Technology development and knowledge transfer in waste management systems
- Sustainable consumption and production, and public green procurement
- Satellite/environmental accounting

5. RISK REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE

- Health
- Extreme weather events, mountain and coastal hazards
- Food and water security
- Information to address climate-related disaster risks
- Vulnerability assessment for ecosystems, communities, businesses and natural resources
- Climate change and hydrology and water resources at regional/provincial levels
- Risks assessment of coastal ecosystems
- Integrated modelling that reduces vulnerability and improves resilience by looking at a combination of: climate vulnerability, impacts and adaptation; economics; social and human dimensions
- Regional downscaling for adaptation, risk, resilience that could be transferred to the local level (including remote communities, districts, cities, etc.)
- Inter-trans disciplinary research and assessment of: Impacts of extreme weather events and slow onset events at regional, sub-regional and local levels (what are the gaps; what is the status quo?)
- Reducing loss by revisiting current aspects of Disaster Risk Management strategies across local, national and regional (including transboundary) scales.
- Non-economic/non-insurable losses due to climate-extreme and slow-onset events (cultural, health, psychological, social, etc.)
- Integrating the risks identified through climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into regional planning: What is the present scientific understanding on adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and loss & damage?

APN recognises the importance of linkages between science and policy, i.e., two way communications between the communities that use scientific information (policy makers and decision makers in society) and scientific communities. These are:

- Research of best practices in science-policy interface options potentially appropriate for APN (e.g., IPCC, science briefings, publications)
- Development of additional science-policy interface approaches potentially appropriate for APN
- Publication of guidelines for APN scientists based on APN's knowledge/experience
- Training and capacity development for science-policy interfacing
- Science-policy interfacing relating to global change
- Transforming scientific knowledge to policy (e.g., communicating science, translating scientific knowledge into decision making processes, knowledge brokers, stakeholder involvement)

APPENDIX 3. COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH MAJOR OBJECTIVES

<p>STAKEHOLDERS</p> <p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>a) Governments and donors, including potential funding partners</p>	<p>b) Decision makers and practitioners</p>	<p>c) Scientists and researchers</p>	<p>d) Peer organisations and science-policy forums</p>	<p>e) Media and the general public</p>	<p>f) Private sector, civil society and the general public</p>	<p>g) APN members</p>
<p>1. To raise awareness about APN's activities and achievement over the past decades</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>2. To effectively and widely disseminate solution-oriented technical outputs and outcomes and findings of APN activities in suitable form and format</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>3. To inform about APN's opportunities, including for funding and partnership</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>4. To foster effective communication among APN members to support better ownership of the Network</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>5. To facilitate effective communication among scientists, researchers and practitioners</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

